

General Trochu's "Notes on the Crimean War"

by Dr Douglas J Austin

[This is my transcription and translation of a microfilm copy produced by the "Institut de France Library, where the original is held under Call number: MS 3723.]

Louis-Jules Trochu (1815-1896) served as a captain in [Algeria](#) under [Marshal Bugeaud](#), who, in recognition of his gallantry in the battles of [Sidi Yussuf](#) and [Isly](#), made him his *aide-de-camp* and entrusted him with important commissions. He was promoted to major in 1845, and to colonel in 1853. He served with distinction throughout the [Crimean campaign](#), successively as *aide-de-camp* to [Marshal St. Arnaud](#), General Canrobert and Pelissier. He was made a commander of the [Légion d'honneur](#) and general of division. He again distinguished himself in command of a division in the Italian campaign of 1859, where he won the Grand Cross of the Legion d'honneur.

Notes by General Trochu on military operations and the assaults of 18 June and 8 September 1855.

Crimean War Unsuccessful assault of 18 June 1855 Note by General Trochu

Crimean War Note on the assault of 18 June 1855

True copy of a note written by General Trochu and communicated to me by the Commandant du Lichtenstein, military attaché to the house of Monsieur Grévy, President of the Republic.

May 1882. Maxime Du Camp

This account was written for Mr Arthur Brunet, son of General Brunet, who was killed during the assault on 18 June 1855

I communicated this account to General du Malroy which he annotated.

Achille de Susleau de Malroy, Lt Colonel of the General Staff, during the Crimean War, was attached to General Simpson and General Codrington, successively commanders-in-chief of the English army, after the death of Lord Raglan.

May 1882. Maxime Du Camp

Note on the assault of the 18th June.

Some preliminary explanations are necessary in order that the logical training of the facts, from which the real truth must emerge, may be well grasped. General Péliſſier had replaced General Canrobert in command. The latter had long enjoyed before the troops a popularity (which is his permanent objective) deserved by a very brilliant personal bravery, although a little theatrical. He had consumed himself in very sincere efforts, very long continued with insufficient means, very meritorious finally, but fatally unproductive as a result of his constitutional inability to decide: "He always sees two roads and cannot resolve to take either one, (says a letter of that time) and if he is pushed to take the right one, he regrets the left one and returns to the crossroads to deliberate." Thus he had done in particular for the expedition of Kerch, of obvious necessity and importance, (Sebastopol receiving by it 2/3 of its supplies), ardently solicited for a long time by the English, ardently persuaded by the entourage, decided after interminable debates, left, arrived and finally recalled. The effects of this inconceivable adventure completed the General's disarray, made command impossible for him, (expressly impossible with regard to our allies) and his retirement became necessary as well as desirable.

His successor arrived at the command with faculties, qualities and defects absolutely opposite. To decide was nothing for him, and from the first moments, as the evidence of this point became clear in the minds of the disgusted troops, his advent was greeted with outbursts of satisfaction and confidence which the author of this notice shared without reserve. I would be surprised," he wrote, "if this old soldier of the good school (the school of Marshal Bugeaud) did not make a name for himself and for us before long. He has a firm heart and a solid head. The signatory of this letter was not long in recognising that the vigour of this old soldier had much less to do with a high spirit and a sense of great duties, than with a kind of brutal stubbornness, born of the insufficiency of education; that capable of deciding everything, he was incapable of working, studying, preparing: That he would command in the manner of a satrap, ordering without hesitation, but occupied all day long in adorning (with his own hands) his palace with badly joined planks, in chatting, in playing, without a care for the sufferings and misery of the troops, without a thought and without a word of sympathy for their daily sacrifices.

Two undertakings, as soon as General Péliſſier took possession, put the final touch to his authority and to public hope. The operation at Kerch was immediately resumed and was fully successful (although the looting of this city, which was open and eager to surrender to the law of the allied troops, did them, in my opinion, little honour). It was an entirely peaceful operation, but one which gave the expected results without delay. And then the Green Mamelon and the White Works - where the Russians, for a long time in a state of offensive against us under the ardent and intelligent direction of General Todleben (the roles of the besieger and the besieged were reversed) had accumulated their efforts and counter-approach works - were stormed (7 June) and occupied. This was an assured starting point for the subsequent assault on Malakoff and the occupation of the suburbs on which the fate of the place depended.

Page from line 9

"a man whose character etc. "

I cannot let this assessment of Marshal Bosquet's character pass without protest. Nothing authorises Gal. Trochu to speak in this way; nothing, either in Bosquet's conduct, or in the manifestations which he was given to Gal. Trochu to make of his own character. Gal. Trochu had begun his career as a Lieutenant attached to the General Staff of Lamoricière, of whom the Captain of Artillery was then the officer of ordinance, but rather still the soul and the confidence. Tug-of-war had not been long in coming between these two officers, one of whom was not only the hierarchical superior of the other, but unquestionably his superior in knowledge, experience, practice of the profession and situation vis-à-vis the troops, as well as their chief. Hence, a jealousy and a rancour which arose more than once and which do not exactly do credit to the character of Gal. Trochu's character.

Gnl. du Malroy

Page 4.

Lines 12 and following.

"In traditional thought etc."

The form in which Gen. Trochu translates here the thought of Gal. Bosquet's thought has a certain picturesque colour which perhaps makes it more striking, but which does not express in a sufficiently precise form the more general principle which guided Bosquet in the preparation of any engagement (attack in the field or attack of a fortified post). This principle, which I heard more than once, developed with supreme authority of conviction and language by Bosquet, who honoured me with his friendship in this way: "Never in war should you engage in an action without having your reserves closer to your head of attack than the reserves of the enemy are to the point you are attacking. Fortress or army, this principle in absolute. Bosquet would not have hesitated to refuse to undertake any operation where this condition would not have been achieved, or at least achievable by moving? and by delaying. This is the principle that he always had in mind in the work of the siege of Sebastopol, as in the war operations that he had to conduct. It is to his strict

observance that he owed his successes at the Alma and Inkermann as well as at the Mamelon Vert and Malakoff; it is to his forgetfulness that the failure of the 18th of June was due in great part.

Gnl. Du Malroy

This success of the offensive, paid for at a high price, was not too much for what it was worth. It depressed the morale and confidence of the besieger and opened the way. It had been prepared by the best preparator who was then in the army - General Bosquet, commanding the 2nd Corps (a man whose character was unfortunately far below his talent and fortune), according to all the classical rules. I mean that three groups of assailants in succession were launched against the objective with the traditional thought that the first would fail, that the second would come in very close and rally the first, that the third would enter and rally two others. This is more or less what happened. General Bosquet had himself given the signal at six o'clock in the evening and presided from beginning to end over all the details of the execution.

Eight days before I had left for Kerch, on a confidential mission from the General-in-Chief. As I took leave of him, expressing my regret at having to leave at the time of the great offensives: "Oh," he said to me, "don't worry, we'll fly while we wait, but make sure you're here before June 18. I did indeed arrange to respond to this advice, the full import of which I could not, however, grasp at the moment, and I returned from Kerch to Kamiesh by a Turkish steamer, the Leiki-Bari? within a week, just in time to witness the removal of the Green Mound and the White Works.

In fulfilment of a promise, which the General-in-Chief had made to me on his accession, I then made arrangements to move from the headquarters (where I still had my tent, but where propriety since the departure of his predecessor, forbade me to do the work of the cabinet) to the command of a brigade (at the left headquarters) which was going to go. I knew, we all knew, that the decisive crisis was approaching. On the morning of the 17th, the General took me familiarly under the arm: "It is tomorrow, June 18th, anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, that we will take Malakoff. I want to give the Emperor and France this surprise - revenge. - But, my General, it is very hasty and risky. The Russians now know our objective. They have accumulated in the Kornilof bastion (Malakoff envelope) and behind it, works and troops that we can see. To march 400 metres (at least) against this formidable device is to defy fate. "That, ta, ta. Go to Martimprey's to see my programme. It will please you and mend your ties with adventure."

My fortune was singular. I had worn myself out with the previous director of our business persuading him to take offence until I was hated. And here I was inconveniencing the new one by advising him to wait and to take the right course. I was now explaining many things to myself, in a way that made the General-in-Chief's mind wander far and wide. Firstly, this stubborn, anti-military, fateful haste, inspired by an intractable and blind pride. Then the unspeakable, monstrous act, detrimental to the public interest, which (on the 15th or 16th) on the eve of the crisis sent back to the Chernaïa the only man who could lead it, General Bosquet, commander of the 2nd Corps. He had been there, in front of the objective of the 18th of June since the beginning of the siege, and had presided over all the approach work, all the efforts (from Inkermann to the Mamelon Vert) that had been made on this tormented terrain.

He knew the strong and the weak. His competence was absolute and unique. He had the confidence of the troops in a higher degree. This is what drove him away. The dazzling success of his assault on 7 June had earned him a military popularity that was annoying. He was not asked for his opinion (nor was I) on the arrangements to be made, and, under the pretext of an imaginary external operation, he was dismissed, replaced by a General (Regnault] de Saint Jean d'Angeley) whose notorious inexperience and incapacity could not be allowed to overshadow the General-in-Chief, who personally reserved the direction of the enterprise. It was a shame and a betrayal.

I went to Martimprey's to see the programme "and he did not mend my fences with the venture. It was far from being according to all the classical rules like the programme of the assault on the Green Nipple and the White Works. The three groups within range of support, making successive efforts, did not exist. The Mayran, Brunet and d'Autemarre divisions were attacking at the same time in a fan-shaped pattern at three different points. Their reserve grouped in a single mass was behind the Victoria redoubt at least 1700 m. from the decisive action! Where was the intermediate corps, the battle corps intended for the immediate rescue of the three vanguard divisions, whose failure (at the first moment) was so probable?

Here I am, beside myself and resolved to face the storm. I enter the house of the General-in-Chief, I expose to him with ardent energy the peril and my fears. I receive a string of insults and mockery, with a conclusion that makes me forget them: "Have you bothered me enough, Mr. Timorous? Go and see Martimprey and do with him what you like; he will give orders."

I return to the programme. Martimprey is persuaded. He proposes General Faucheux's brigade (eight battalions, I believe), from the left side, the only one which seems to him to be safe to move. I high-five him, but he does not want to give the order, he goes to ask for it and comes back with it. The order went out, (but without my being able to specify the time) it was the afternoon, the day already advanced; we shall see the consequences of this delay.

The General-in-Chief had decided that a little before daylight, at three o'clock in the morning, he himself would give the signal (three coloured rockets) for the assault from the Victoria Redoubt. At midnight, I left my tent. I set up the headquarters, the horses saddled, that of the General-in-Chief at his door. Calculating that he cannot stand the gallop, that he cannot sustain the trot beyond a few minutes, I judge that two hours will be necessary for him to reach the goal. I invite Lieutenant Colonel Cassaigne to wake him up.

I stop for a moment on this sweet and touching military person: Lieutenant Colonel Cassaigne had been the great laureate of the Prytanée. The first (out of line) at Saint Cyr in my promotion. The first out of line at the Staff College. He had the highest faculties of the soul, the rarest qualities of heart and mind. Mathematician, poet, draughtsman, superior in all respects to the most distinguished men I have known, he added to the merits of this superiority those of the most sincere modesty and a cordial benevolence. I was always ashamed to compare my career with his and to be his general. He passed in all the army, to be, after the fortune, the author, at least the principal adjutant of the career of his chief which, long years, he softened completed and directed. But some foolish souls had told General Pélissier in the Crimea the rumours of the crowd, and since this revelation inspired by interest and intrigue, the General had had on his nerves this faithful servant, who was to perish, carried off by a ball lost in the assault of 8 September. His only brother, a young captain in the Zouaves, had had the same fate a few months before, before Sebastopol. And their mother, the respectable widow of a captain, holding, in a more humble existence, the post office of a village, survived all her family!

Poor Cassaigne, badly beaten, returned full of discouragement. Colonel de Waubert was no happier. No officer of the General-in-Chief's Staff wanting to repeat the effort, I decided to act myself and went to show him that he had little chance of arriving in time to give the signal. He made up his mind, grumbling and jeering at my agitation, and set off. We walked in a half-dark night along the known paths, at a pace, with a slowness that filled me with anxiety. Our alternating performances did not touch him in any degree. At the Grand Ravin, the first cruel disappointment and the first painful omen, we met the Faucheux Brigade, (the battle corps, at least the intermediate reserve). It had received the order late, it had lost its way in the night, the day was about to dawn and it was 6 kilometres from the action! Lost auxiliary. The General-in-Chief does not care. It is not him, it is me who put it in the programme. Overcome by emotion, I push my horse towards his

at one point and tell him rudely: "But the day is coming!" and I show him the dawn on the horizon.

Without saying a word, he puts his horse into a trot; we walk at this pace, we hear the fusillade and the cannon; we arrive at last at the place of the signal, our souls upside down, it is day! We all know now that the struggle has begun; as our ears have heard it, so our eyes see it.

This is, among many, one of the poignant memories of my life, and I felt a feeling of hatred enter my heart against the man whose cynical indifference was the cause of so much misfortune and evil.

The three rockets went off, however, and certainly no one saw the colours.

Page 12.

Lines 9 and following:

In order to be perfectly accurate and to give a fair share of the responsibility, it should be said that Gen. Mayran, who had been in a feverish state of impatience for more than an hour, was 20 minutes ahead of the time set for the signal for the attack, despite the efforts of Colonel Lebrun, his Chief of Staff. On the other hand, Lt. Brunet, ardently solicited by Colonel Laville, his chief of staff, to take part immediately in the fight, as long as (rightly or wrongly) it was engaged, refused to launch his troops before the real signal, which was itself 20 minutes later than the set time. There was therefore an interval of 40 minutes between the two attacks by the Mayran and Brunet divisions, when to have any chance of success they should have been simultaneous. Apart from this reservation, which does not, moreover, cover the responsibility of the General-in-Chief, the account and assessment of Lt. T.'s account and assessment appear to me to be strictly accurate.

gnl. de Malroy

However, what had happened in front of Malakoff? General Mayran at about three o'clock in the morning saw one or more rockets (from where they came) rise above our rear works. He judged that this was the signal, and launched his troops to the attack, and it was by the outburst of the cannonade and the fusillade that his colleagues and collaborators, Generals Brunet and d'Autemarre, were warned at the same time as by the real signal, seen or not. Overwhelmed in its isolation by the fire from the square, overwhelmed by the fire from the bay of the fairing (embossed steamers) the Mayran division was violently brought back.

The Brunet division, recalled a few days earlier (15 or 16 June) from the Chernaïa to take part in the assault, was unfamiliar with the maze of new trenches from which it was to attack. It had tramped all night with great fatigue to find its positions and was not yet fully formed when the General had to remove it to throw it forward in turn. The retreat of Mayran's Division left the right completely unsupported and Brunet's Division was overwhelmed like Mayran's Division.

Only Autemarre's Division, relatively supported on its right by Brunet's effort, and on its left by the English effort, which was vigorous as well as disastrous, was able to place its column head in the Russian Gervais battery (Malakoff advance) where it held out for some time with rare constancy.

We were spectators of this great military drama. Lord Raglan next to General Pélissier, their staffs behind, with no news yet, but all silent, all penetrated with the deepest emotion, for we had been able to see the successive retreat of the two divisions, and the fire of the Russians, formerly so violent, had absolutely ceased in both directions of this retreat. No one, I think, among us had the thought of making the reserves (the Imperial Guard) massed near us march, which would have had nearly two kilometres to do under fire, to complete our first sacrifice by a second much more extensive and much more certain.

A first officer came forward announcing the capture of the Gervais battery and asking for reinforcements for the troops holding it. As far as I can remember, General P[élissier] replied rather harshly that he would advise him. A second officer came who announced that Mayran and Brunet had been mortally wounded and that their troops, with great losses, had returned to the trench. "If they had not died, (said the General through his teeth, turning to me, who was on his left, a little behind,) I would have referred them to the council of war.

I raised my hands to Heaven, addressing a prayer to Him for these faithful servants of the country (1), for these great victims of duty, for these men who had been among us, during a long career, complete models of professional value, of conscience, of dignity of character. I protested to God of the unworthiness of their judge, who was overcome by feelings which neither the striking calm which he showed during and after that dreadful crisis, nor his later greatness, nor the grave to which he has long since descended to give an account in his turn, have been able to erase.

(1) With them had been struck that day men who were the great hopes of the future: Larrony, d'Orion, Guérin, de la Boussinière. They had joined General Bizot, who had died earlier, at the hands of the enemy, as befitted such a disgraced soldier, as befitted such a character.

Notes on the Crimean War and on the assault of 8 September 1855.

True copy of a note written by General Trochu and communicated to me by the Commandant du Lichtenstein, military attaché to the house of Monsieur Grévy, President of the Republic.

May 1882. Maxime Du Camp

This account was written for Mr Arthur Brunet, son of General Brunet, who was killed during the assault on 18 June 1855

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Achille de Susleau de Malroy, my cousin, Lt Colonel of the Staff, during the Crimean War, was attached to General Simpson and General Codrington, successively commanders-in-chief of the English army, after the death of Lord Raglan.

May 1882. Maxime Du Camp

Notes on the Eastern War and the Assault of September 8, 1855.

In order not to misunderstand the feeling which dictated this note, it is useful to know that it was written by the author in reply to a letter which asked him for an account of the most salient facts of which he had been a personal actor or witness. To get an accurate account of this great military event, it is necessary to consider the succession of true events that preceded it.

In an exclusive thought, as it seems to me, of military prowess, without well defined political goal, without determined military objective, without instructions taken or only of foresight, without siege park, without transport material, a small French army had been thrown in the East; army of maritime expedition which could not attempt anything considerable without the moral and material support of the vessels which carried it. The English army, even smaller, was constituted in much the same way. It would have been an adventure, if the free possession of the sea had not been acquired by the allies and if the union of their flags had not surrounded the enterprise with an enormous moral prestige.

The first to arrive at Gallipoli, assured that after the imminent and certain capture of Silistria, the Russian army would cross the Danube, the Balkans and march (as in 1829) on Andrinople and Constantinople, fortified themselves in the Gallipoli peninsula. Marshal de St. Arnaud and Lord Raglan applied 20,000 men to the construction of a line of works which closed the

isthmus, very hard work, carried out under a very hot sun, which began the disorganisation of the public health and prepared the dreadful ravages which cholera was soon to inflict on the troops.

But Silistria did not surrender, and sensible officers made it clear that even if it did surrender, the Russians could not show themselves in the Black Sea, nor occupy Varna or Bourgas, nor any point on the Bulgarian and Roumelian coast from which their supplies and renewals would have come to them; they could not pass either the Danube or the Balkans; that our fortified stationing at Gallipoli could no longer be justified, and that it would not be long before we would be the object of the world's jeers.

We left for Varna, and I must say that the insistence of the English contributed greatly to the adoption of this judicious resolution. The Russian Army, which had exhausted itself in its efforts around Silistria, (a Turkish place defended by Turks is not easily taken), sensing us in its immediate vicinity, raised the siege and left.

What to do? This was the question which occupied all minds, and which became the basis of all the deliberations of the council of the allies.

I have no doubt that if Wallachia had not been (providentially) occupied by General Coronini's Austrian corps, the allies would have crossed the Danube, following the Russian army in its retreat to the Pruth and beyond. All the practical means of execution were lacking for this crazy French enterprise and moreover it offered no objective. Nevertheless, everyone was inclined to it and I still remember the lively and sometimes bitter discussions I had on this subject every day with the big and small. But we did not want to offend Austria. We negotiated with General Coronini in Bucharest and with the imperial government in Vienna, obtaining neither a yes nor a no and wasting precious time in dilatory exchanges, during which considerable events came to put the allies at the foot of the wall of a definitive decision.

These events, whose almost coincidence struck all imaginations, were: the Dobroudja expedition, directed as a test against some Russian corps remaining on the right bank of the Danube; the lightning invasion of cholera; the fire of Varna. They proved: 1o that the army, for lack of equipment and means provided by the country, was in no condition to carry the war far from the coasts and from its ships; that its immobilisation, its idleness, the nostalgia, the concern for the disasters, of which it had just been the witness, by cholera and by fire, weakened morale, threatened its very existence and that finally immediate and bold action became the imperative law of the situation.

In the Council of the Allies, two officers who had, in intimate conversations, discussed the question at length, had agreed that the enterprise of Sebastopol, however perilous it might be, was the only one which offered a solution to the problem, feasible if hastened and worthy of the two nations. Little listened to until then, they had as resolute and almost malicious adversaries the two admirals-in-chief, (Admiral Dundas and Admiral Hamelin); they suddenly had more credit under the influence of the events reported above. One of them, Rear-Admiral Lyons, (the greatest character and the best spirit of the English army) had rallied several English officers to his views; the other, Colonel Trochu, had, for his part, effected conversions in the same direction among the French officers. They had obtained that a commission, of which they were a part, would go to reconnoitre the objective. They returned confirmed in their opinion. The argument was hotly contested, with this opinion gaining ground. It had found a new auxiliary in Admiral Hamelin's Chief of Staff, Captain Bouet-Willaumez, who, from a technical and moral point of view, had the answer to all his chief's incessant objections.

Lord Raglan was still neutral. The Marshal of St. Arnaud, very weakened and often

bedridden, was nevertheless following the debate and leaning more and more towards the desired solution.

It was at this point when a letter from the Duke of Newcastle (1), Minister of War in England, to Lord Raglan, put an end to all uncertainties and to the opposition as well as to the black predictions of the two admirals and their supporters. It expressed: "That public opinion and the opinion of Parliament made it the obligation of the English Government to carry out the enterprise of Sebastopol; that therefore, unless there were absolute impediments for which it would have to account, it was necessary to act in that direction; that the French commander-in-chief would receive from his minister a letter in all respects similar to this one, that thus the concert could not fail to be established." It was infinitely less resolute and left the Marshal of St. Arnaud all latitude to go or not to go; approving however that one went if one could. The French letter (from Marshal Vaillant)

(1) The Duke of Newcastle was the son-in-law of Admiral Lyons, and it may be supposed that the private correspondence of his father-in-law influenced him in the course of his views.

I have perfectly present, not the terms, but the meaning of these two letters and the different impressions I received from them.

In any case, it was not necessary to decide everything, and to decide firmly on the solution of a question already ripe. Lord Raglan became very clear about it, Marshal St. Arnaud even more so: The frightened and the disgruntled fell silent. I drafted and had the Marshal sign a letter summoning Admiral Hamelin to act, somewhat rudely and solemnly (this letter, which must be found at the Navy, for I sent the Minister of the Navy an ampliation signed by the Marshal, would be a document of great interest to support your story). It was an act of courteous rigour which left the good man no room for escape. He knew of my initiative, and kept a big grudge against me.

Thus at Varna for Sebastopol, as previously at Gallipoli for Varna, it was from England and the English army that the final impulse came. This historical fact is interesting to record, especially if we compare it with that revealed in Lord Palmerston's letters (1), recently published, "that it was the Emperor Napoleon III who urged England, disposed to confine herself to the sea war, to set up an army with his own and to go together to the continental battle." Here we find England as she is made, looking closely before committing herself, but, committed, going to the goal with an invincible energy and a lot of follow-through. This is precisely the opposite of our temperament.

(1) It is from memory and from having read them in the newspapers that I recall this statement by Lord Palmerston.

After a very laborious, but well-ordered and successful embarkation, the crossing (10 days) was made without difficulty. It was marked by a particular incident which deserves to be mentioned here. Six days after departure, on September 10 (1), I think, before dawn, Doctor Cabrol, the Marshal's private physician, entered the room I occupied on the Ville de Paris. Very pale, agitated, solemn at the same time, (2). He told me that our chief, who had been very ill for forty-eight hours, was suffering from a new attack of illness, (angina pectoris,) which would be the last. He had experienced at least ten since Gallipoli, and that all the symptoms of an approaching end were very apparent. Doctor Cabrol was my friend, and for a long time it had been agreed between us that he would warn me of the disaster we were expecting, so that I could ensure the transmission of command. I went with him to see the Marshal. He had become unrecognisable during the night. His eyes were dull, he was speechless, he uttered a few inarticulate complaints, his face was covered with sweat, his chest was heaving with convulsive movements, and he represented agony to me, and a terrible agony. Never, I think, have I seen or experienced anything more gripping; for at last the landing was approaching and we all had the feeling that it would be

contested, and that this would be the great battle.

(1) I cannot find this date of 10 September written anywhere in my papers, but I believe it to be correct.

(2) Doctor Cabrol (senior doctor 1st Class) was specially attached to the headquarters. The Marshal had given him his confidence and he deserved it. Never in his most intimate outpourings, (which had no limits with me,) had the Marshal spoken to me of his possible or probable succession; but it was a faith in the whole army that General Canrobert had been designated to take it. He was young, very popular, very much in court since the events had enthroned the Empire, very much desired by the opinion.

I ran to him and told him the situation. Without hesitation he denied that he had a letter of command. Stunned, full of anguish, I left him hastily, announcing to him that I was going to find (on another ship) General Forey (the most senior divisional officer in the army), when he stopped me: "Well yes," he said to me, "I have a letter of command, but I am resolved not to make use of it until the Marshal is dead. Try to keep him alive until the landing."

It was here that my confidence in the man, which was complete by hearsay (by I had not seen him in action) grew cold never to warm again. He had no taste, yet less the devotion of great patriotic responsibilities. He was not just a happy African general, and a vulgar soul. But the event proved him right. Twenty-four hours away, the Marshal came back to life once more.

Returning to my post, consumed with worries, but resolved to continue to the end my deplorable role of anonymous conductor of events, I called Lieutenant Colonel de Waubert, my colleague at the Marshal's side, my friend, (at that time) and my confidant: "I cannot, I said to him, allow this man to die obscurely, who, condemned in Paris by Doctor Reyer and warned by him, wanted to come and die here. This end redeems all the errors of his life. It is right that it should be glorious. I am going to bid farewell to the army, and, signed or not, at the time when he disappears, I will put them in the order of the army and the Fleet."

This is the origin of the first of Marshal de St. Arnaud's farewells to the army of the East. When he came to, I put the document in the inside pocket of a uniform capote that I was not to recover for many days. I found it there, later, at the Mackenzie bivouac, (bivouac of thirst) where it was to have its job.

The Marshal, a circumstance which is scarcely to be believed, but which seems to be explained by the special evolution of the illness which was killing him, was able to go on horseback as far as the Alma. He made, himself, on paper, contrary to the opinion which spread then in the army, the plan and the preparation very well understood, of the battle. The accounts that have been given are true enough. However, the French tradition, faithful to its habits, is far from attributing to the English, in the effort and in the success, the share which rightfully belongs to them. Without doubt our climb to the heights of the left bank of the Alma was very brilliant, but it was only seriously contested around the Telegraph, and then the ascent of the slopes by our troops was already an accomplished fact. Everywhere else, and as far as the sea, they were little or not expected. At the Telegraph, (where I was personally representing the Marshal,) we had before us only a group of Russian infantry, numerically inferior to our whole, and battle-gun.

The English, on the other hand, had a frightfully difficult river crossing to support. Beyond this the ground sloped gently up to the hills at the foot of which stood the Russian army with positional guns (of large calibre) and, protected by the earthen lifts, battle-guns and finally the whole prepared fighting apparatus. I believe that few troops in Europe are capable of the strength

and tenacity shown there by the redcoats. After the capture of the telegraph, I galloped over to their side to see how their affairs were going, and to encourage them by announcing that we were going to turn the enemy's left up there. The venerable Lord Raglan, under an unbearable fire of cannon, surrounded by ten officers, who were not spared by the balls arriving in succession, was in the middle of the ford, activating the passage of the stragglers, full of that phlegmatic calm which is the character of his nation. As I came up to him with my kepi in my hand, I was filled with emotion and respect. Oh," he said, "there you are. It is warm here. And after listening to me: "That's very good. Tell the Marshal that we are doing our best. And he held out his one hand to me.

Yes, they were doing their best. The memory of this scene, of its simplicity, of its true greatness has remained deep in my mind. The cripple of Waterloo was an old man worn out by age, but he had the great traditions, and in character as well as in feeling, he was the worthy representative of his country.

The losses of the English were double ours. They carried cholera with them (much more than we did), marched laboriously and slowly, lived badly. They arrived at the battle more than five hours late, did not finish until nightfall and could not use their magnificent cavalry (1200 and 1400 horses) which should have completed and, I think, made irremediable the rout of the Russian army.

Here we are at Mackenzie's bivouac where we had brought the Marshal lying on an ambulance mattress, in a nasty carriage taken from the battle (full of vegetables and various supplies) which, without fail, we had made Prince Mentchikoff's personal crew. During the journey, Doctor Cabrol had pointed out to me that the patient's complexion was darkening, that his features were becoming deformed, his nose tilting to the right. It is," he said, "a slow choleric invasion which adds to his other miseries. However, he still spoke easily and seemed to listen with interest to the reports I gave him. I had informed him in particular at the previous bivouac (of the Belbeck), that the Russians had just closed the port of Sebastopol by two parallel booms of sunken ships!

I stop for a moment on this event which put at naught the plan of attack of Sebastopol, provisionally decided in council in Varna, made inevitable our turning march towards the south and was the true origin of the siege of Sebastopol.

This plan (to which the vigorous letter of Marshal St. Arnaud to Admiral Hamelin (Varna), which I have previously recalled, constantly alludes) was this: 'We were to invest and take (in 15 or 18 days, with the worst chances, according to General Bizot) the great fort of the North, an occupation which would bring down all the defences of the right bank of the port of Sebastopol. The ships of war entered there in queues, embracing to ruin, by a frightful fire, the defences of the left bank and the whole city, of which, under the moral and material influence of this destruction, the army took possession.

The project was bold and was certainly to break many of our ships (which, as I have said, the admirals-in-chief regretted); but its effect was to be almost irresistible. The enemy foresaw it, and his resolution (reminiscent of the burning of Moscow by far) rendered him vain.

I return to Mackenzie's bivouac where the last act of the drama was to be played out, as far as the Marshal was concerned. On that day, going south, we had given way to the English, who were peacefully carrying their cholera patients. Our march to their right, full of obstacles, stopped at every moment, under a burning sun, without water, was dreadful for the troops and for all of us. We could not get beyond the Mackenzie plateau, where we arrived in the dead of night, in indescribable disorder, all dying of thirst, without baggage, except the Marshal's tent, which was always carried in his wake. It was pitched in the middle of a space cleared of bushes, the sick man

set up on his cot, we around, sleeping at the foot of our horses, the bridle in our arms.

At one o'clock in the morning, Doctor Cabrol, whose rare devotion always kept watch, came to me. "He is dying," he said to me; "come along; the Marshal is asking for you."

He had the appearance of a spectre; but unlike what I had seen on the City of Paris, he spoke clearly and his gaunt face was lucid. (There was no crisis of anguish.) "My friend," he said, "I feel very ill. I was moved to tears; suggested to me a sudden and decisive resolution. "It is true, Monsieur le Maréchal, that you are very ill, and the burden of command is wearing you down. Let me tell you a truth which you will not suspect; which only I can tell you and which I regard as a very painful but necessary duty. You must resign the Command." - "Yes, you are right, send for Forey."

Thus the Marshal de St. Arnaud did not know that he had a designated successor. "But, Monsieur le Maréchal, it is not General Forey; it is General Canrobert who must take over your succession. He is the bearer of government orders. Ah! Canrobert..... "I am well pleased. Send for him." Without manifesting surprise, which I expected but which the excess of his weakness and the indifference which was the result probably did not allow to occur.

The General came; I left them alone and I do not know what happened in the supreme interview, but while it was taking place, I took, where I had put them (1) sixteen days before on board the Ville de Paris, the farewells to the army. I modified the last paragraph to make room for the victory of the Alma and its aftermath and, in order to give them an authentic character, I made him sign them after a reading which did not seem to move him.

(1) In the inside pocket of my uniform capote.

I have kept this interesting document, crossed out towards the end, yellowed by time, and bearing the last signature that the Marshal gave in this world. It was placed on that day, 26 September, in the army order.

I do not insist on a host of details, very curious however, which led the English to occupy exclusively (too exclusively) the port of Balaklava, (where the Marshal, whom I never saw again, had been transported) and the French the unknown, but excellent port of Kamiesh. We are in front of Sebastopol, whose defences on the southern side are visible before our eyes at a distance of 3,500 metres. We reconnoitred them at a gallop, forming a mobile group of scattered officers, who could hardly wait for a few isolated cannon shots, which allowed us to judge the whole thing fairly closely. We found that all these defences were not yet connected and that a strong attack was possible. It was formally proposed by the English General, Sir de Lacy Evans, who warmly supported his opinion. It was not supported.

This question had then, and subsequent events have since given it such importance, that I want to discuss it here. It is certain that the victory of the Alma had demoralized, even despaired the enemy, as is shown by the inconceivable sacrifice which he made of his Black Sea fleet, to arrest the momentum of our first efforts on Sebastopol.

It is no less certain that the morale of the Allied troops was at its highest level of energy. For this double reason, I believe that the sudden invasion of the place by the French and English columns, operating the latter under the eyes of the former, assisting each other in the action and lending each other mutual moral support, was successful. The Russians expected the enterprise, for at the time of our arrival their forces in the city, the available crews (of the sunken vessels) not counted, were numerically very small; and they had prepared everything for the evacuation. (1)

(1) Two deserters announced that with the sailors, there was only one brigade of infantry in the place.

It must be considered, on the other hand, that the defence was becoming an irreparable disaster; for the allies had only been able to arrive in the Crimea with a minimum of means because of the difficulty of transport by sea. The complementary means were far away and even a notable part of the cause which had been able to follow the two armies as reserves (supplies, ammunition, tools,) were, at the time when they should have invested the place, on board of the ships.

The responsibility as well as the possible consequences of the enterprise were therefore enormous, and there was no man among the Allied leaders of sufficient experience and authority to bear the burden. I think it would be unfair to reproach them in this respect for the reasons I have just given, and for the other reason that in difficult cases, when the leadership of an army is replaced by a concert between two armies of different nationalities, the problem is infinitely difficult, as we saw throughout the siege of Sebastopol.

I have often been asked what I think Marshal de St. Arnaud would have done if he had been there. I have always answered: "I don't know about Marshal St. Arnaud. He, too, was an African General, a General of fortune, who in the course of his military life had done little work and little meditation. "For Marshal Bugeaud, I affirm." He knew to a high degree the philosophy of war. For him, in war, everything depended on what he called the moral effects. To bring them into being for his own benefit and to use them was his whole science and his whole effort. He would have entered Sebastopol the day after (at dawn) the arrival of the two armies, in front of the still incomplete defences of the South.

But, in the situation I have described above, everyone, Generals and troops, felt that from Gallipoli to the Chersonese plateau, we had walked from improvisation to improvisation. Now that we were faced with a very real and very big objective, we felt the need to improvise less, to collect ourselves; to prepare somewhat for the coup de force that was still to come. This is how the aim of making the march of the troops on the two roads (Route Woronzoff and Route de la Poste) which opened the access to the square less dangerous by the prior action of the artillery prevailed, naturally and logically. The two objectives to be countered were in full evidence and (at that time) as isolated. They were the Central Bastion for the French, and the Grand Redan for the English. But the aim, judicious in appearance, was distorted by a considerable fact which did not have

In the deliberations of the Generals, the place which belonged to him: a fact which alone is the cause of the siege of Sebastopol, of its incessant difficulties, of its long duration. It is that any artillery struggle, by armies which had none, against a place which was by the importance of its own, by the size of its calibres, by the numerical strength and by the speciality of the personnel who served it, the most powerful arsenal that was, had to turn against the attackers.

This is what the artillery battle of 17 October, after which the troops had to move to the objective, began to show. Our 56 guns of all origins and calibres, accumulated in 5 batteries in front of the central bastion, were promptly silenced, the batteries partially overturned. The English, less mistreated, did not obtain better results, and the troops, since the morning under arms, ready for action and well disposed, had to return sadly to their bivouacs.

They returned to their bivouacs in a very different moral state from that which animated them after the Alma. It was no longer a question of a coup de force; the prospect of a siege and of prolonged efforts during the winter which was already looming, struck the least clairvoyant eyes. Instead of bivouacking as we had done until then, we began to settle down and when the first of the

"Hundred Thousand Clogs" came from Varna in August, under fire from the Marshal and the General Staff, I had demanded that the Minister of War issue an official letter with reasons, it was a blessing. It is that, in a French army, everyone acts, no one plans. The fire opened on 19 October, after very difficult repair and renewal work (to our naval and siege guns, we had added Turkish guns), had no more decisive effect. The same was true of all our subsequent partial artillery battles, notably the terrible generalized cannonade of 9 April, the result of the crushing work of the whole winter. The Allies on that day opened fire with at least five hundred guns against the place, whose defenders suffered enormous losses. But their earthworks were not ruined, and the eleven hundred pieces (at least) with which they were manned continued in service.

This was the work of Penelope..... While it was in progress, one man led the main works with a dedication, an effort, a modesty, a simplicity to which I want to pay tribute here, which the government of the time, and the always deceived opinion, have refused him. It was General Bizot, the engineer.

Line 11.

*"This is, I believe, the last & e"
Here, the tip of the ear of the Governor of Paris in 1870!*

Line 20.

Why "Public career"? It had not yet begun, as far as I know.

I never had before my eyes such a great example of what can be produced, first with nothing, then with little, by a sense of duty in arms, combined with a superior patriotism. He knew no rest, he knew no peril. Under the most intense fire, he was entirely devoted to his observations and his studies, with a natural calm and a naivety of bravery which filled me with esteem and respect for him. Such a soldier, such a servant of his country deserved to end as he did, in disgrace, killed by the enemy. This is, I believe, the destiny that Providence expressly reserves in this world for men capable of great selflessness and great sacrifice. The reward that he keeps for them is elsewhere.

Replaced in command by a distinguished man, even more skilful than distinguished, Niel, he passed to the second rank with imperturbable serenity, continuing the effort as if he had kept the responsibility. This is the highest character I have met in the French army in my political career.

It has been said and written that we all recognised too late the importance of the position of Malakoff, between the various works developed on the enclosure, and this is the grievance that has been especially raised against General Bizot. What inconsistency and what injustice! In the condition in which we were and with the means that we had, no other part of the enclosure could be attacked than that which touched the sea, by which we came all our resources and to which all our works had to come immediately to be supported, at the risk of losing everything by a successful turning movement. To come to attack Malakoff with reasonable chances of success, it was necessary that the immense works of the two armies, reinforced by the Sardinians and the Ottoman troops, extend almost without interruption over a development of nearly four leagues, from the bay of Strelezka to the point of Mount Sapone, that to carry out these works, to occupy them, to constitute the reserves etc., the manpower of these armies was tripled and that their material of siege was increased in much greater proportions. More than seven months were necessary to carry out the main part of this prodigious transformation of the Crimean Expedition, and during these months the Russians, who were far more tenacious diggers than the Allies, in addition to the formidable works of counter-engineering, were able to build up a large number of defences.

Line 10.

"Everyone saw the new objective.

The gal. Trochu is unaware that this objective, which he calls new, had been brought to the attention of the Allies as early as 18 October by General Raglan himself, and this is more or less how he put it. After the failure of the fire opened against the Place on the 17th of October, the very next day after this disastrous date, a Council of War had been held in which the generals-in-chief of the two armies and the special generals of the engineers and artillery, had recognised the necessity of requesting and awaiting considerable reinforcements in siege artillery, in ammunition of all kinds and in personnel. It was agreed to continue, in the meantime, an artillery fire as active as it would be possible to carry out against the defences of the place, in order to delay its development, and especially to maintain the morale of the army which an absolute inaction would have compromised. With these considerations in mind, Lord Raglan asked if it would not be possible to detach a dozen position pieces to the right of the square in order to worry the enemy towards the Malakoff Tower and further divide his efforts. The French artillery general (gal. Thiry), answered that it would be useless to weaken the batteries on the left, already insufficient for a really effective action. The General of Engineers (Gal. Bizot), and after him, General Canrobert shared this view. Lord Raglan insisted at first, aiming that since action on the left of the square was recognised in advance as ineffective, little would be risked by carrying part of it to the right. The French generals did not yield to his reasons, so Lord Raglan concluded by saying: 'Since the contrary opinion prevails among you, I bow; but be sure that what you might do towards Malakoff would not be wasted effort, for sooner or later you will make the main attack there.'

These words were recorded in the minutes of the session of the Council of War, & I have had them in my hands. gal. De Malroy

The approach which made them for a moment besieged, completed their defensive enclosure. And it was then that this somewhat isolated tower, which at the beginning of the siege we called "the White Tower", appeared surrounded by works which linked it, on one side to the fort of the South, on the other to the bay of the Carénage, forming this formidable citadel of Malakoff which was to cost us so much. Oh! then, no one was mistaken. Everyone saw the new objective. It dominated the suburb and the ports of Sebastopol, so it was to be occupied.

But what did this disproportionately enlarged situation and the accumulated means (which included most of the military state of France at the time) have in common with the situation which poor Bizot had encountered and the means at his disposal?

For the same reasons, those who would reproach General Canrobert for not having taken Sebastopol from the day of the opening of fire (17 October), to the day he resigned his command (19 May), would be unfair; he could not.

But he could oppose by acts of vigour, when he had manpower and material (as General Pélissier did without delay) the counter-approach work of the enemy, whose boldness ended up singularly exceeding ours, lowering our moral state to the benefit of his. He could not commit the enormous fault, fought by all his entourage, unavowable in its causes, irreparable in its effects, of the recall of the Kerch expedition, long recognised as necessary. A purely interrogative sentence in a letter from the Emperor: "Isn't the Kerch expedition an hors d'oeuvre? (Textual) set him off. He could not bear the thought of the responsibilities that he thought it would create for him. He sent out by a viso his officer, Lieutenant Martin, with an imperative order for the return of this small squadron and for the Anglo-French divisions almost at their destination, which was going (without danger) to intercept the great supply route from Sebastopol. And, having done so, he charged me to go and inform Lord Raglan. It was on the pleas of the English and myself that he had decided on this little side operation. I had arranged all the details with the English headquarters. How could I go back there with such inexplicable news? How could I comment on an order which the General-in-Chief did not have the right to give (as far as the English were concerned), which implied their abandonment by our troops if they persisted in the enterprise?

I formally declined this deplorable mission which I considered unworthy of my character. Lieutenant colonel de Waubert, against his will, carried it out. He came back upset by what he had seen and heard, putting the finishing touches to the uncertainty, to the regrets (for he recognised his error) and to the confusion of the unfortunate General-in-Chief. He announced his resignation. I told him sincerely that I indeed thought it necessary, and little by little, with the help of the Cipher, we made the translation of it immediately transmitted to Paris by telegraph.

Certainly there was in this resolution a certain degree of greatness of soul, but, greatness of soul or not, the resolution had to be taken, because the authority of the chief, depressed on the French side, was absolutely undermined on the English side. Command had become impossible for him. And then this act had such considerable subsequent rewards for the General that I have never been able to admire it without some intimate reservations. He was an intelligent man, a very brave soldier, but of a bravery infinitely less simple than that of General Bizot. The need for popularity spoils everything. The finesse is great; the character is small.

From the opening of fire (October 17) to the retreat of General Canrobert (May 19), the main events were: the battle of Balaklava - the battle of Inkermann - the successive construction by the enemy (to whom it did much honour) of these great defensive and counter-approach redoubts of Seleginsk, Volhynia, Kamchatka or Mamelon Vert at the siege of the right: of a work in front of the Central Bastion (taken on the 2nd of May by our troops) at the siege of the left, etc. - the death of the Czar. The recall (already mentioned, with its consequences) of the first expedition of Kerch.

I will say no more about these events, the battle of Balaklava and the battle of Inkermann, than a few words which I think necessary.

The battle of Balaklava, fatal to the English cavalry, was the result of one of those misunderstandings which justify the opinion I sometimes express: "that of all the Generals who operate in war, General Chance is too often the most successful."

The Russian General Liprandi, on the morning of October 25th, had driven out without difficulty from the redoubts which barred the valley of Balaklava, the Turks who occupied them. At the sound of the cannon, the French and English camps (at the siege) had come under arms awaiting orders, and in the morning (from 8 to 9 o'clock, I think) the two generals-in-chief with their staffs were grouped on the high peaks, steep in this place, which border the valley. I was next to Lord Raglan, and a few paces behind him stood the English Captain Nolan, an ardent and good-natured officer, with whom we all sympathised. We had the following scene before our eyes:

1o. Immediately below us, very near as the crow flies, very far away by the repeated winding road which led to it, the main body of the English cavalry under Lord Lucan, all the light cavalry in particular under Lord Cardigan.

2o. On the right, in the distance, in the plain, between the port of Balaklava and the redoubts, the immobile Scots Greys (Large cavalry admirably mounted) about 300 horses.

3o. Between the abandoned redoubts and to the side six Turkish battalions.

4o. A long line of Russian infantry and artillery bordering the foot of the heights in front of the one where we were, its left supported by the most distant redoubt, its right more than four kilometres from us, the whole estimated by us at 20 or 25,000 men.

5o. A considerable group of Russian cavalry, a brigade I think, was running in charge on the Balaklava side right at the Scots Greys who kept their immobility and did not seem to perceive

the storm which threatened them. Some Russian squadrons, detached from the main group, were running towards the tents lying on the ground where Lord Lucan's cavalry had camped, which also remained motionless and seemed to see nothing (I believe they saw nothing, the undulations of the valley robbing them of the striking picture of which, from our high observatory, we could see the whole and every detail).

Our hearts leapt. "My lord," I said to Lord Raglan, with an indignant emotion over which I had no control, "the Scots are to be devoured, and your cavalry, which can overwhelm the enemy by a charge in reverse, will not assist them." - "Yes, yes, I see," said Lord Raglan, (we were all of the same mind) and he dictated to his Chief of Staff General (General Airey) a short note which Captain Nolan, no less animated than the rest of us (unfortunately) and galloping off carried to Lord Lucan.

It took him perhaps $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour to reach him, by the tracks, and in the meantime an unforeseen feat of arms (not for those who, judging dispassionately, know the effort that an English troop can produce at any given moment) was being accomplished before our delighted eyes. The Scots, waiting for their adversaries, received them by a short discharge, and, methodically shaking off, penetrated with invincible resolution their mass, where they disappeared for an instant, only to reappear at the other end. In my life I have never seen this. I have never seen it again in my life. The Russian cavalry, in full rout, ran to the shelter of the redoubts and did not appear again.

And when Captain Nolan, full of his subject, was with Lord Lucan, whom he summoned (as I have heard from the English officers) in some way to obey the orders given, there was nothing left of the circumstances which had prompted them: nothing but a few nasty Turkish guns, driven by the Russians out of the redoubts, whose success in making the prescribed movement (in the conditions which no longer existed) would have led to the recapture, for the English infantry and ours were on the move and united with the cavalry which remained intact, they could have operated at least this rescue of very mediocre interest before the end of the day.

The event which followed was thus the result of a deplorable fatality, it gave us the painfully admirable spectacle of a few hundred English cavalrymen charging an entire army corps by a defile of which batteries of cannon and battalions formed the sides. It was a destruction in which the brave and unfortunate Nolan perished, who, as the bearer of the order, had wanted to be one of the executors. He was, no doubt, an ill-balanced head, but he was a great heart.

On the battle of Inkermann, the events of which are well known, and militarily speaking, beyond discussion, I will only make a few reflections which are inspired by the vivid and very present memories which I have kept of that harsh day, as well as by the taste which I have for truth and justice. There is no doubt that the French were the saviours and the English the saviours.

It is also undeniable that the first arrivals on the battlefield successively and in small groups approached the enemy in disadvantageous conditions in this respect. But this enemy had been fighting for four hours, after a night full of fatigue, on narrow terrain, with incessant alternations of setbacks and successes, in a battle that had become a massacre. The French, full of that spirit and that valour which are their strength in forward marches, preceded by their noisy fanfares, carrying with them the then immense prestige of their arms, arrived at the psychological moment, and if the material power of their intervention was weak, its moral power was without limits. It struck the enemy through the most vulnerable side of the masses engaged in merciless struggles that lasted too long, the imagination. It gave back to the English not only hope, but enthusiasm, as the ardent cheers of the decimated Coldstreams regiment showed as we reached the height.

Yes, we saved the British, but we abused the rescue. We cheated to the point of making the

world, ourselves included, believe that without our "heroic effort" they were done for.

And if they had not, during those four deadly hours, one against two, on almost every point held the Russians in check by crushing them here and there, what would have happened to us, unable to group on these heights which commanded all our camps and all our positions, more than ten thousand men at a time?

Let us reverse the roles. Can we imagine fifteen thousand Frenchmen silently enveloped during a dark night by thirty thousand of the strongest adversaries in existence and warned of their presence only by a hail of projectiles launched by sixty cannon (1) which knocked down tents and killed men in their sleep? And during the first two hours of the battle, under a fog as thick as the night, the generals killed, the battalions half destroyed, the ammunition exhausted?

(1) There were at least as many in the Russian reserve.

What would have happened, I will say it plainly: a frightful confusion with a storm of shouts of "to arms" dominating all the voices of command instead of the deep silence in which the phlegmatic Anglo-Saxons remained. Groups of men crashed into each other in the darkness of the fog and finally an irreparable rout whose moral effect would have 'electrically' penetrated all the French troops who remained outside the conflict.

And my firm conclusion - expressed on the field to General Bosquet whose vanity (at least equal to his talent) never forgave me - was that, if we had ended up saving the English, they had begun by saving us.

Will my (French) opponents say that we would not have let ourselves be surprised? But the French army is the one that is most and best surprised! In the war of 1870, it suffered unheard-of surprises. We saw in broad daylight, under the afternoon sun, the troops at the water, the wood, the coffee, their business - a whole army corps surprised in its bivouacs by the Prussian cannonade and unable to oppose this unforeseen aggression, other efforts than disorder and retreat.

It is that our carelessness in front of the enemy, produces at least to the same degree, the same effects as the cold indifference of the English.

In war, the English do nothing like the rest of us. They are slow, unindustrious, not very good at "getting things done". They promise to help in a concerted operation which they consider necessary, but for which they do not have the means. Their pride (equal to our vanity) prevents them from admitting it. They get away with not appearing on the day and apologising after the event. Yes, they are inconvenient bedfellows who draw as much cover as they can; but on the day of great peril, especially if they have eaten their 750 grams of beef and taken their tea, what invaluable companions!

"Be sure," said Marshal Bugeaud to me, (a veteran of the Spanish War), "that the English infantry is the most formidable in Europe. Fortunately there are not many of them." May God grant that France, seeking to raise her fortunes with the interested assistance of England, may say, in the future, "unfortunately" there are not many of them.

General Bosquet, in constant contact with the English and suffering especially from their deviations, did not like them very much. This sour disposition of his mind is better explained than justified. He saw things narrowly.

A battlefield anecdote to show how the generals of merit from the African War (which distorted the whole French military tradition) differ from the generals of merit from the great wars

of the past. It is at least three o'clock in the afternoon. The battle is absolutely over, although the steamers from the port of Sebastopol still criss-cross the edge of the Inkermann plateau with their projectiles. I cross the battlefield on foot, as the horses, which are agitated, refuse to move in the middle of this heap of dead and wounded.

I meet General Bosquet who leads me to the edge of the plateau, facing the heights of the right bank of the Chernaia. He solemnly shows me the bridge over which the Russian army had retreated. There, between the bridge and the foot of the heights, on an almost flat and very extensive surface, great movements of troops were taking place in various directions. In the centre there was a mass of dark grey, motionless, in the midst of which a few isolated individuals were coming and going. It looked like a large infantry division lying down and sleeping.

"Do you know what that means," said the General to me with a sort of grave irritation? It means reinforcement troops who have come from afar, and who, being tired, are resting; that, in a little while, these rested troops and preceding the others will assault the position again." I was stunned. The shadow of Marshal Bugeaud with the memory of his everyday teachings on the moral effects loomed before me.

"Not only," I said, "will the position not be attacked today or tomorrow, but it will never be again. The frightful butchery of today has forever cured the defeated of the need to undertake on our plateau. And the victors themselves are sufficiently moved and weakened by it to be out of condition to profit by their victory."

"Yes, we know your biases; but I keep my feeling and I will put myself in measure."

At this moment the General de Martimprey arrived at our side. He was a tough soldier, as well as a man of weight. (1) He heard our debate, took a few steps to the left and put four or five times in the field of his telescope the scene which so deeply agitated General Bosquet. He observed and reflected at the same time. Suddenly, turning towards us, he said with his characteristic silent smile: "These are the Russian wounded." It was indeed the 6 or 7 thousand wounded that the Russians had been able to carry back during the battle, (leaving on the field nearly a thousand more wounded and four thousand dead) that had been deposited there.

(1) This is General de Martimprey, now Governor of the Invalides. [FROM 1883-1891]

I have done the English army the justice, nothing but the justice that is due to it. I do it very willingly to the Russian army. The efforts they made at Inkermann were worthy of those they made defensively and offensively from the beginning to the end of the siege. The Russians are, by their remarkable solidity, by their admirable discipline, by their singular aptitude to stir up the earth and to bring out citadels unexpectedly, adversaries with whom one should always count.

I cannot dispense with saying a few words about the moral state of our troops from the beginning of the siege to the return of spring and the arrival of resources, that is to say, during the period of their great efforts and their great suffering, due to their numerical insufficiency, to the insufficiency of resources of all kinds (supplies and food, tools, war material, etc.), to the excess of the work to be done on the battlefields.), to the excess of work, to the rigours of the winter, (persistent snows, cold blacks particular to these regions, thaws which drowned the trenches and even the plateau, hurricanes etc.). Abundance did not begin to occur in the camps until the contracts passed with the house Pastré of Marseilles which had agents and counters in all the Levant, had their first effects.

This moral state of the troops was remarkable. One would have thought, before the

events, that the known temperament of our soldiers would not bend well to such harshness, to the long immobility of the trench, to this succession of efforts always begun in hope, always ended in impotence. Their moral education, null then as now, had certainly not prepared them for this. It was done by a gradual succession of proofs which formed the habit and by the example which energetically and incessantly gave the superior corps of engineers and artillery, always on the alert and in danger.

The spirit of the officers (those of the engineers and artillery being a striking exception) was only sufficient on the whole, although among them many gave proof of a generous devotion, which they almost all paid with their lives.

The spirit of the Generals was the weakest. This corps did, however, contain some men of great merit, who were to the end, perishing here and there, the supporters of the enterprise. But many, outside the action and as a spirit, had lapses to which the evidence of their situation gave a regrettable importance. Some of them, in the bivouac, had made themselves teachers of public demoralisation, madly showing the impossibility of success, the certainty of final disaster. One of them went so far in this direction that I proposed to the General-in-Chief to cut short this state of affairs by a great example. It was a question of seizing the culprit, of embarking him for France by handing him over to the Minister of War and of announcing to the army by a vigorous order of the day this moral execution. I drew up the order; but when it came to the point, the General postponed and finally abstained.

The fine days which removed the principal of our trials, the arrival of reinforcements of troops and equipment, above all the advent of General Pélissier, put an end to this situation. It was he, commander of the left siege, who had recently (2 May) persuaded the General-in-Chief that it was necessary, at all costs, to remove the enemy's counter-approach in front of the Central Bastion and had it occupied by our troops who had stayed behind. Four days after taking command (23-24 May) he had the great Gabionnade, the enemy's counter-approach, removed in the same way (in front of the Quarantine, near the cemetery). This succession of necessary, urgent and successful offensives, which completely cleared the left siege, put all hearts back into balance. The defaulters disappeared, the professors of demoralisation fell silent; there was no more talk of them until the end of the siege. If I add that the new General-in-Chief - whose sympathies for the English were not denied during the siege - had, at the very hour of his arrival at headquarters, taken up with our allies, through my intermediary, the subject of the enterprise on Kerch (carried out on the 22nd), it will be easy to judge that the clouds which had accumulated, on this subject, around our international relations had completely disappeared.

Confidence and spirit were everywhere.

Here are a few intimate details of the last effort I made (at the headquarters from which I was resolved to leave forever) to serve behind the curtain the situation which was being transformed.

I judged that it was of the utmost importance that General Pélissier should have a few hours of reflection and examination before being invested with the great responsibilities which awaited him. On the evening of the day we had transmitted to Paris the dispatch in cipher by which General Canrobert resigned his command and expressly advised the Emperor to hand it over to General Pélissier, I went to see him at night. He had been formerly at Oran, chief of staff of Lamoricière, whose aide-de-camp I was. Our relations had always been excellent and I had with him a close and reliable friend, my old comrade and fellow student at St. Cyr, Lieutenant Colonel Cassaigne of the General Staff, the most morally and professionally accomplished officer that the French army has had for perhaps fifty years. In the end, it was he who had made General Pélissier. It was he who

inspired him, he who worked, he who wrote, he who tempered the effects of his bad education and the impulses of his natural brutality. The General's firm and stubborn will did the rest. He had never left him. He was sincerely attached to him, despite his faults. Lieutenant Colonel Cassaigne, who was to perish in this war (with his brother killed like him by the enemy), was an absolutely superior man.

I entered with him at the General's, to whom I revealed everything, ending my confidence with these words: "Are you ready. - What do you mean by this? - I mean that this army no longer knows what is wanted of it; that it is uncertain, confused, disgusted; that if you do not take command of it with a programme decided in advance, the first acts of which vigorously confirm the confidence it is willing to give you, we shall fall back into glue (mucilage). In order to do this, you need to XXX??? It's been a while, I'll bring it to you. - Cassaigne, show him our notebook."

The notebook, all in Cassaigne's hand, was a very strongly motivated project of attacking all the enemy's counter-approaches to the left and right sieges, the occupation of the most important one (the Mamelon Vert) being intended to prepare the attack on Malakoff, considered as the main objective. I also read judicious considerations relating to further attempts at occupation in the interior of the Crimea, the occupation of Kerch, the capture of Anapa.

I was full of joy. It was clear that, without foreseeing the present facts, Cassaigne had studied a great deal and that he had considered in a well-meaning work and had made his general adopt the ideas to which, in both armies, the best minds were committed.

You are ready," I said to him, "and I am going away quite happy. But I beg you, begin with Kerch, in order to bring back the English at once, over whom your authority will, by this, be solidly assured, at the same time as you will singularly embarrass the people of Sebastopol. - That is agreed."

Before leaving him, "In exchange for my confidence, listen to a personal wish; I wish to leave the General Staff and to have a command at headquarters, in the troops where I would like to finish my career. You have no need of me. Give me the brigade of La Motterouge who is going to be promoted. I have been a brigadier since the beginning of the siege and I am thirsty to live among the soldiers. - You will have the brigade, but I will keep you for a few days to receive from you, about the past, the information which I would need."

I returned to my bivouac at one o'clock in the morning delighted with my adventure. It was known only to Colonel de Waubert, who was waiting for me in the tent we shared at headquarters.

The principal events of this second and last part of the siege, in addition to those related above, (accomplished from the beginning by the new commander, as an expressly intended counterpart of what the previous one had done) are: the removal of the White Works and the Green Mamelon Vert (7 June) - the failed assault on Malakoff (18 June) - the death of Lord Raglan (28 June) - the battle of Traktir (16 August) - the successful assault on Malakoff and the occupation of Sebastopol (8 September).

The occupation of Kerch, which had succeeded to perfection and produced all the results expected of it, had been reported as a very painful incident. The city, which was absolutely defenceless and at whose gates the notables were standing, claiming for it the benevolence of the allies, was shortly after the entry of the troops, delivered to pillage. There was a corps of French, a corps of English and a corps of Turks, and the cooperation of the latter in such disorders was not likely to temper the effects. The museum of antiquities (called the Mithridate, I believe) was ransacked. The people, especially the women, were subjected to severe abuse. These were scenes

(an eye-witness tells me) most saddening and disreputable for the arms of the allies. Obviously before the entry of the troops, the generals had neglected to have the banns of occupation published at the head of the companies and to have the town solidly occupied by strong safeguards and support posts. But it was an international disorder with three, those attributing the initiative to those and charging in any case and as it could not fail to happen the savagery of the Turks. It was necessary to pass the sponge.

I had been sent on a mission to Kerch by General Pélissier, to examine the situation and especially to study the means of taking the fortress of Anapa by force or by some form of siege (which the General did not want to give more than eight days to in any case). When I arrived in front of the place, the Russians had just blown it up.

In a note previously addressed to Arthur Brunet, relating to the failed assault of 18 June and the serious faults of all kinds which made this painful failure inevitable, I had occasion to point out, by comparison, the well-judged arrangements made on 7 June, by General Bosquet for the successful assault of that day. I have little to add to the few words I have said about it: Everything had been foreseen, by the anticipation of the whole and of the details was the master faculty of this very well gifted General officer. The successive action of the reserves staggered at useful distance had its full effect, when the column heads folded. The Ouvrages Blancs on the right, the Mamelon Vert on the left, finally remained in our power, and the engineers specially directed by General Frossard, (of rare energy) immediately prepared there, under fire, a solid defensive installation.

There, officers of great value, Colonel Brancion, Colonel Hardy and lastly General de Lavarande, of brilliant future and regrettable memory, perished (1) Lt. Colonel Larrony d'Orion (killed later on the 18th June) of the 97th regiment had led, by the Carénage ravine, a lateral operation, (intended to cut off the enemy's retreat from the Ouvrages Blancs) which succeeded to perfection and highlighted the rare guiding faculties of this excellent officer.

(1) Before the capture of the Mamelon Vert, between this redoubt and our trenches, a senior officer, full of promise, Lt. Colonel Waissier, whose efforts at Inkermann had been very remarkable, had been killed. (7th light.)

The British on their side had removed the Russian ambushes from the quarries. Their heads of column wanted to go further and were brought back. Ours, leaving the conquered Mamelon Vert, made a no less important point on the side of Malakoff and were also brought back. But these two secondary incidents, due to the anger of some groups of soldiers and which were not in the programme for the day, had no influence on the final results.

To the details I gave in the previous note on the failed assault of 18 June, I must add one which I have omitted and which compensates to some extent for the serious responsibilities which General Pélissier assumed that day. The rout accomplished and irremediable in its various effects, now well known, he became very calm, very self-controlled, ate on the spot with a good appetite (while we were all unable to do the same) and finally gave the English and French Staffs (Lord Raglan was next to him) the example of true fortitude. It may be that the uncultured indifference which was at the bottom of this singular organisation had a great deal to do with this attitude. Nevertheless, it impressed us and did him credit in the minds of all. His venerable colleague was deeply saddened. He had endured all our trials and tribulations up to that point, despite his advanced age. This one seemed to exceed the measure of his remaining strength. Stricken by the cholericiform disease which reigned here and there in our camps, he died on the 10th day (28th June) taking to the grave the regrets of the English army and the regrets of ours.

Of the battle of Traktir, I know nothing more than what everyone knows, not having been

there, and as in this account I attach importance to not introducing any hearsay, I abstain. That day, 16 August, I was in command of my brigade at the left headquarters, having only a few hundred workers in the trench, all the rest in bivouac. In the morning we heard the cannon on the Chernaïa side and at about eight o'clock I received the order to march in that direction. I took up arms and left on the hour without relieving my workers, going at full speed and immediately followed by the 2nd Brigade (Couston) of the Levaillant division of which I was the first. When at three o'clock I arrived at the Balaklava Pass with harassed troops, the battle was over and the Levaillant Division was ordered to return to its bivouacs.

The happy results of the battle of Traktir restored confidence to the spirits that the serious failure of the 18th of June had troubled us. This unforeseen event, considered from the point of view of the siege, was for our legions of the Chernaïa plain, what Inkermann had been for the lines of the plateau. It was security. It was apparent to everyone that the Russian army would have to give up all attempts at external diversion. The siege which had remained the big affair by the invincible force of things (1) became the only affair and it was with a return of hope and enthusiasm that the allies concentrated all their efforts on this objective.

(1) The Emperor and the Minister of War had several times expressed the opinion (timidly) that it would "perhaps be wise" to regard the siege as a secondary objective and to carry the bulk of the troops into the interior of the Crimea. This was not only unreasonable, it was materially impossible. The British always opposed it and so did I with all my might.

I now come to the assault of 8 September. In the course of this lecture I have already had occasion to say how and why Malakoff became the real and necessary point of attack on the Sebastopol enclosure.

From the day when this conviction was acquired, all the solicitude of the command (in its various degrees) was on that side. Work was done and action taken everywhere, but it was in this direction that the greatest efforts were made and the greatest risks were run. The capture and occupation of the Mamelon Vert and the Ouvrages Blancs was the first act of this three-month drama. The work of advancing on Malakoff and the Petit Redan was the second; the assault was the third and last.

What this work of progress, at once immense in its development and inextricable in its detours, represents in sweat, peril and sacrifice can hardly be expressed. In the last few weeks it cost an average of no less than 200 men per 24 hours (killed and wounded)! This blood-soaked terrain was fought over foot by foot. All night long there was a big or small battle, the besiegers and the besieged mixed together; all day long there was cannon fire, shells, bombs, fusillade; but the work was still going on. And so we reached 30 metres from the objective, the primary cause of the success of 8 September.

How did the work always go on? Here I must pay tribute to those who deserved it, the tribute that truth and justice keep for the brave people. The soul of these efforts was General Frossard. I do not know and I do not have to judge here the circumstances which made of this energetic soldier a man of politics and a man of the court. Like the most unfortunate of the generals of the war of 1870, he was the victim of the errors of his government and of events. He was mocked, insulted and had the misfortune to die. But what I know well from having seen him is that the instruments of the capture of Sebastopol (that is, of Malakoff), principally because their action was continued in the preparation and completed in the execution, were General Bosquet and General Frossard.

The General-in-Chief, enlightened as to the real interests of the enterprise - and the lines of

its own - by the deplorable failure of the 18th of June, had recalled General Bosquet from the lines of Chernaya, where he had, as I have said, exiled him the day before - in an infinitely undisguised jealous concern. As soon as the work converging towards the Malakoff massif was resumed, he gave him back the local direction with the command of the troops and he was well served. The general, following them from day to day, became practical in their maze and for the object that each of them had to fulfil to a point that could not be exceeded. Armed with this necessary science, he studied at leisure, in view of the assault, the possible points of concentration for the troops staggered in successive reserves in the trenches, the shortest and safest paths (in trenches) to reach the terraced benches from which they were to rush forward in the open, etc. Its preparation (I have said that this was his special aptitude) was, like that of the assault on 7 June, based on a set of forecasts and precautions that could not have been better understood. They were the secondary cause of the success. I said above what the primary cause was.

When I did not have trench duty in the left siege, I went to visit the works in the right siege. I was struck by the sound and firm direction they were receiving, and towards the end I never returned to my bivouac without bringing with me the confidence that we were at last holding by the handle the instrument of the solution.

It is a principle (issued by Vauban) in siege operations, that no assault is possible when the enemy's lateral artillery fires can reach the attack columns that he assumes everywhere starting from the very foot of the obstacle (breach or wall, or inclined plane in unlined earth) have not been absolutely extinguished beforehand. The wealth of artillery and personnel equipment that the place possessed had not yet allowed this condition to be fulfilled, despite the intensity and duration of our cannonades, that of 9 April for example, which had put more than 2,000 men out of action in Sebastopol in a few days, according to the concordant statements of deserters. And then firing on covering masses of earth, our artillery upset a lot, but demolished nothing and did not produce those ruins that night work cannot repair.

In the siege on the left, the approaches to the central bastion, over their whole extent, were swept in all directions, (independently of the direct fire) by overwhelming lateral fire, notably by a long series of batteries attached to the Bastion de la Quaraine firing cannonballs and by the salient of an intermediate lunette (I no longer know its name) firing grapeshot.

Moreover, except in front of Malakoff and the Petit Redan linked to Malakoff and forming part of the same system, we were far from being at the foot of the obstacle. The English, for example, were (I think) 150 to 200 metres from their objective, the Grand Redan! We were in front of the central bastion, (as far as I can remember) a hundred metres away; in front of the Bastion du Mat even further.

By all these concordant reasons, and every day discussed, an opinion had been formed about the approaching crisis, among us who received our impressions directly from the facts themselves. We judged that the assaults on the Central Bastion, the Bastion du Mât, the Grand Redan of the English, were materially impossible and that all the efforts of the Allies, constantly renewed by powerful reserves, should be condensed around the dominant massif of the Malakoff, comprising the armed battery of St. Gervais, the Malakoff bastion, its long curtain wall and the Petit Redan, together offering a development of more than a Kilometre, and in view of each other, could act.

It must not be forgotten that in this supreme struggle against the bulk of our armies, the defenders of the place were to be impressed with a considerable moral effect. They were fighting against the sea, and their principal means of retreat was over that sea, a narrow defile.

On these data, between Generals, in exchanges in which the opinion of General Rivet (1)

chief of the General Staff of the 1st Corps had a first place, we had accepted the following programme for the assault: "For about ten days, the allied batteries (nearly 800 pieces, I think, whose supply had been raised for several months to maximums,) were to overwhelm the works of Sebastopol all day long, the works and the town all night long (it was during the night that under this fire, unbearable during the day, the changing of the guards and all the troop movements in the place, the comings and goings of workers, the transport of ammunition etc.) were carried out. If the fire of 9 April had put more than 2,000 men out of action there, we could count on that of the next would bring this destruction to the double, with an important material disorder and with a considerable moral disorder.

(1) General Rivet had been for a long time with me aide-de-camp to Mal Bugeaud. He was my friend. He was an officer of great sense, experienced, cold, solid. He was killed during the assault on the Central Bastion and this was one of the most considerable losses of that day for the army and for the country.

During this time, by movements carried out at night; in advance so that the men had sufficient rest before the crisis, one would call to the right siege, from the lines of the Chernaïa and the left siege, all the available troops, leaving to the old siege only the numbers necessary to make demonstrations of assault in front of the works. (These demonstrations would be made at the useful hour by frequent displacements of the troops, by apparent transport of ladders, etc.) The English operated in the same way in front of the Grand Redan.

This was the general movement and this was also, it was said everywhere, the feeling of the commander-in-chief, but none of us bothered to make sure. For two months, no one had been going to headquarters except when expressly and officially mandated. General Péliissier had arranged a singular life for himself there. He did not go to the trenches. He never visited the ambulances. He did not work. His time was spent looking through a telescope into the distance, playing games, chatting with a few favourites, including his incomparable aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Colonel Cassaigne. Jealous flatterers had made him suspicious by insinuating that it was said in the army that he was his Égérie (and although after 8 September the General gave a speech of regret at his grave) it was common knowledge that the worthy servant had his share of the master's slaps.

[N.B.: 'Égérie' = a FEMALE advisor/counsellor]

On the morning of 5 September General Rivet came to my bivouac. Very agitated, he told me confidentially that from the conversations of General de Salles (present at the councils which met at the Commander-in-Chief's house) he inferred that the assault would be given to the whole perimeter of the place and that it would be effective on all points. He added that General de Salles was personally opposed to this project, but that as it was a question of risking his troops in particular, we could be assured that the self-respect, with which he was full, forbade him to oppose its execution; that, moreover, the crisis was nearer than we imagined, given that the workers (they had had to put on the helmet and the cuirass of the sappers) and the guards who had arrived at the foot of Malakoff were encountering such abuse that we could not remain long in such a situation.

Considering it under all its faces, General Rivet judged and I believed with him that I had the duty (it was the 2nd time,) to use my old intimacy with Cassaigne to risk an effort, and I wrote the following letter which Rivet undertook to give himself to the addressee. (As Chief of Staff of the Corps he had kept frequent contact with Headquarters).

"5 September 1855.

Dear friend,

I know that the state of progress of the work before Malakoff does not make it possible to wait for the realization of the program of the ten days of fire with new and multiplied means.

This is very regrettable, because under the previous command, it was the programmes followed which we have always lacked, and here is another one which escapes us, the value of which the reports of the enemy himself have previously noted.

But in the end, given the impossibility of waiting in front of Malakoff, we must make do with it and take Malakoff immediately. I believe more and more that the means of achieving this is to bring before this work a maximum of infantry superior to all that one can expect to find there. With the precondition of a good artillery fire and with such a close starting point, success seems certain. The affair done, a great material result is produced, a great moral effort obtained, under the impression of which one must be able to carry out everywhere else, in front of the place of the decisive attacks (1) which previously served more than risked. To carry out these attacks at the same time or almost at the same time as the main one by launching the whole of the troops on all the points, it is a useless butchery and it is a Va-tout, because in this case the possible failure has incalculable proportions and it can ruin the company.

(1) None of us had the thought that the occupation of Malakoff could immediately decide the enemy to abandon the place by blowing it up. We counted on several days of resistance, the time it would take us to arm our conquest with powerful artillery.

On our side, for example, where our 16,000 to 18,000 men (we do not have more available, whatever they say) will encounter insurmountable obstacles and behind an inextricable jumble of batteries and ground movements with a superior number of defenders that our reports fix at 20 or 25,000 men, is success probable even for the most optimistic? No. And in case of failure do we have in rear a reserve of 10 to 12,000 men to protect the situation? No. The whole operation is a Va-tout. ("Go for broke!")

Previously after the battle of the Alma and the happy arrival of the army under the walls of the square, even after the battle of Inkermann, there have been beautiful Va-touts to play with. Rightly or wrongly, it did not seem that France and England, defending such enormous interests so far from home, could reasonably place themselves in the alternative that we admit in an ordinary war, of winning everything or losing everything.

Now, after we have waited for everything to be done to avoid this alternative, seeking to achieve partial successes without compromising ourselves greatly; after we have energetically resisted the government itself, which wanted us to go and risk battles in the interior of the Crimea; when, as is announced on all sides, the enemy's rope is so worn that he is obliged to risk Va-tout himself, such as the battle of Traktir..... Is this the case for playing ours? I think not.

Oh, I know that if this general attack succeeds, it will not be half successful, and that the good people who wrote the above reflections will then be crossed with importance! But should such concerns prevent a friend of the public good, a friend of the Commander-in-Chief, from saying what he believes to be true? Moreover, I feel strong from my past, strong from having worn out my life for a year in supporting the timid and the faltering, in supporting firm resolutions, the operation of the Azof, the removal of the Counter-approaches, and before all that the removal of Liprandi in the Balaklava valley. And, in the next day, I will gladly give my life to ensure the success of the grandiose project of which I am today showing the risk.

Now, if we are here misinformed, if the project must be executed otherwise, or if the headquarters has information naturally unknown to the public, which gives it special grounds for security, I have spoken in a vacuum. And it will only remain for you to excuse this untimely speech in favour of the intention.

"Valeas." ['Valeas' (Latin) = 'Keep well!']

Lieutenant Colonel Cassaigne had told General Rivet, the bearer of this letter, that the General-in-Chief inclined towards the views it expressed, that they were his own (Cassaigne's) and that it was likely that they would definitely prevail.

When, on the 7th September, General de Salles called his generals together to announce the general attack and to give them orders, he told us how things had gone in the council. The General-in-Chief had expressed "that it would perhaps be wise to make outside the massif of Malakoff where indefinitely renewed efforts would be concentrated, only the demonstrations to hold in the various works the Russian troops which defended them. On this first presentation General Bosquet, with an animation bordering on the outburst, had declared that in such a crisis everyone, whatever the cost, had to act without calculating the possible or the impossible; that the struggle had to be generalised - army against army - (he repeated at every moment). The English, whose attack - if ours (on the left) was a murder - was an assassination, naturally made no objection. General de Salles for the same reason made no further objection. The Commander-in-Chief did not insist. The programme of the general assault was resolved.

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Page 61 - line 21 and following.

Page 68 - lines 6 and following.

In these two passages from his notes, Gen. Trochu endeavours to establish the advantage that there would have been, at the time of the final assault on Malakoff, in making everywhere else only demonstrations, and in the same sense, he seeks to throw on gnl. Bosquet alone, the responsibility for the adoption of the contrary party which he calls "more than a fault, "a murder" and "an assassination."

The gnl. Trochu commits here an injustice of historian towards gnl. Bosquet, whom he does not lose an opportunity to belittle, while recognising the merits that he cannot deny him without putting himself in flagrant contradiction with the opinion of the entire army. But moreover, he covers with the mantle of "military philosophy" an error which once again highlights the distance which separates the military writer from the real man of war.

On the many occasions of war that Lt. Bosquet had had to study as an instrument, or to lead as a leader, he had been able to recognize that what is called "demonstration", almost never reaches its goal. Any false attack designated in advance as such, or/and by the same token struck by impotence. In order for it to have a useful effect, it is necessary that the troops destined to carry it out believe it to be genuine. It is up to the general-in-chief to lead it and to stop it in such a way that it responds to his designs. This kind of demonstration, called a "false attack", had been abused more than once, and the result had always been useless or disastrous for the one who made it and for the one who expected help or support from it.

In any demonstration in front of a stronghold, where the defender can easily move his reserves from one point to another, two things happen: either one does not commit oneself enough for the enemy to be mistaken, and then he puts all his efforts on the real attackers; or one commits oneself too much so as not to lose many people without result, since one does not have to go all the way.

General Bosquet particularly abhorred the word 'false attack'. Now, in the Council of which Trochu speaks, General Bosquet was the only one who had the right to make a false attack. Trochu refers to, Gen. Bosquet insisted that all the troops should know? Well, that they were taking an effective part in the assault on Sebastopol. As this was also the duty of the General-in-Chief, it is not surprising that he did not object, and the programme of the general assault was adopted, without prejudice to the provisions which were to limit the action of the troops at certain points, provisions which perhaps were not everywhere taken or executed with the military intelligence which should have governed them. But, whether Gen. Trochu lost people and was wounded himself, it is not known that Lt. Bosquet "had only a narrow view, a view of Africa ? and perhaps tempted by egoism.

Today, as then, I say clearly that here again General Bosquet, an incomparable preparator, had only a narrow view, as a leading general, (an African view) and perhaps it was tempted by selfishness.

And the event provides more than one proof of this. The first is that all the assaults made with admirable vigour by the troops who were not at the foot of the obstacle failed after a massacre. The second is that (as I will explain later) when the killing began in front of the Central Bastion, after two o'clock in the afternoon, - to support the assailants of Malakoff - the combat which had been going on since midday in Malakoff had made us the masters of it, although the enemy, to cover the retreat, continued it until about four o'clock.

There was therefore no concert, no coincidence between the two operations. Moreover, they were separated by a distance of 4 kilometres and did not lend each other any kind of mutual support. The fact demonstrated afterwards what reasoning had demonstrated before, that the killing of Gauche was absolutely useless. It would have been dangerous if the assault on Malakoff had failed.

The capture of the Malakoff massif, like all victories, especially victories which have immediate and immense military consequences (which save the policy of two great governments and end the anguish of two great nations) has been described in all its details and celebrated in all its tones. I shall not repeat the story here, which is, apart from poetry, glorious for the troops who did this hard work.

The other efforts that ended in failure have naturally remained obscure or unknown. (1). I would attach great importance to highlighting here those of the English, but I know nothing in particular about them and I am reduced to limiting my account to what happened on the side of the Central Bastion, around me, because I saw nothing of what happened around my colleague, General Coustou.

However, on the subject of the English, a memory: Lord Raglan had had as his successor the dean of his divisional officers, General Simpson, of middle-class origin, not very authoritative in front of the English aristocracy of London and the Crimea, but esteemed. I had only had an exchange of visits with him, in which the quiet dignity and simplicity of his attitude struck me. Immediately after the capture, he telegraphed his government: "We have made the assault. The English have failed, the French have succeeded.

(1) Moreover everyone, after the event and from the appearance of the place, felt the insanity of these enterprises. Those in charge spoke about it as little as possible. Without any further explanation, when there were so many explanations to give! This was a death sentence for him and his replacement was not long in coming.

Now there's a man! I am quoting from memory this dispatch (which was made public) but I don't think I am deviating much from his text. It fills me with esteem, even admiration for him. And when General Simpson, relieved of his command and returning to his country, came one day into the poor barrack where I was in a very bad state "to take," he said to me, with a gracious bonhomie, "news of me to England" - "My General," I said to him, in turn, with as much sincerity as emotion, "I receive from you today the greatest honour that has ever been conferred on me in the course of my career.

General de Salles, after having outlined to us the general plan of the operation, gave the floor successively to the Generals who were to lead the heads of the assault columns. I said to him: "You know my opinion of this enterprise and I know yours. There must be no question of it now and I can assure you that the morale of my troops will be at such a high level and that they will go

all out and fight as if their success were certain. But I make one observation and I ask you to submit it immediately to the General-in-Chief.

The Levaillant Division (1st Trochu Brigade, 2nd Couston) has an excellent starting point as an expanse and a well-prepared outlet. The two objectives are relatively close together. The Autemarre Division (1st Niol Brigade, 2nd Breton), the Sardinian Cialdini Brigade, the Bouat Division (Lefevre and Duprat de la Roquette brigades), which were to attack the bastion of Le Mât, had none of these advantages. The troops established on the left (Paté division, Sol brigade,) even less.

Moreover the Central Bastion with its two glasses of right and left has views of reverse or scarf on the works that these troops must attack. If, therefore, General Couston and I manage to get into the massif, the task of the other troops will be singularly facilitated. If we fail, it will be radically impossible and their losses will be enormous. I therefore ask that no troops, apart from our two brigades, be launched until we see them arrive on the salient. "This is perfectly right," says General de Salles, "and I undertake to have these views approved."

I need not say here how I prepared my brigade for its effort and with what energy it accomplished it. I had asked it for 200 volunteers, ready to sacrifice their lives to form my column heads, it offered me more than 500. (1). On the evening of 8 September, out of a strength of 2,300 men launched into the assault, 71 officers, 900 non-commissioned officers, corporals and soldiers were missing, killed, wounded or prisoners. (2).

What is particularly interesting is to tell in broad strokes how things happened. By 8 a.m. my troops were established within range of the crossing benches, each column having its clearly designated objective in front of it, the work we called the left lunette and which the Russians call the Bielkina or the salient of the Mast Bastion. In front of each a group of (1) 560 (2) The Commander of the 21st Regiment Lt. Colonel Villeret and the young Baton de Bourgoing, both officers of the future, perished there. Almost all the volunteers were killed.

Ten Captains were killed or mortally wounded at the head of their companies of volunteers and ladder bearers.

On my right was the Couston Brigade whose objective extended from the salient of the Central Bastion to the right lunette (which the Russians call Schwartz).

It was understood that General de Salles, who was established in the rear and who was to receive the signal from the Brancion redoubt (in front of Malakoff) where the General-in-Chief was standing (I do not know by what process) would transmit it to us in the following manner: the bugle would sound everywhere, ringing our raging artillery batteries "Cease fire" and, as soon as the cannon fell silent, we were to rush forward.

Towards midday after four deadly hours of waiting, during which I had many killed and wounded, by the fire of the square, and also by some of our shells which came bursting over our heads, we heard the fusillade from Malakoff. All my people, subjected to a hard moral restraint since the morning and devoured with impatience, stood ready. But no signal! and I estimate that this violent situation lasted for more than two hours! To what is the incident to be attributed? I have never known. But to say my feeling here, I believe that the General-in-Chief, entirely devoted to the capital operation that he had before his eyes and knowing well that it had no solidarity with the accessory operation of the old siege, forgot about us.

Finally, at about 2 to 2.5 in the afternoon, at the signal: "Cease fire" carried by the bugles throughout the old siege, the artillery fell silent. My volunteers and ladder bearers took off like a

shot and I myself jumped out of the trench, (I was a young man then) having on my right my aide-de-camp Capitan, on my left the brigadier of Spahis Ahmed ben Abd el Kader, (a faithful servant who never left my side) and all three of us called loudly to the brave people, rushing with them towards the objective. I had the left face of the Central Bastion in front of me, (looking at it) and it was when I reached the end of the ditch that I received a cannon shot which hit me to the bone (which remained intact) in the calf of my left leg. It was like a frightful blow from a stick, not too painful though, and allowed me to stand up, first leaning on my sword and then on Ahmed who had passed me for a moment and who came back to me when he saw me stopped. Capitan (1) was slightly injured. .

(1) Capitan was another Cassaigne and one of the greatest hopes for the military future of the country. It was not from the localised madness of the Central Bastion, but from the generalised madness of Mexico that he was to die. He was killed in Puébla in an act of sacrifice as in the Bastion. I could have predicted this fate for this valiant young man, whose mourning I shall carry to the end of my life.

If one considers that the musket gun fire from close range, the cannon fire from farther away, all coming from our left, made the earth and the stones fly incessantly; that the assailants shot directly and laterally at the assailants, raining hand grenades on them as soon as they encumbered the ditches; that these ditches were generally so deep that one could only descend into them at many points with the aid of ladders; that the covering mass, formed particularly of sea barrels (in cast iron) superimposed was almost everywhere impassable and exceeded by one meter the largest ladders (4 meters); that above and on all the circumference of the work, as soon as the most daring and the most vigorous ran, the fougasses exploded under their feet. One of them buried almost the whole of the 6th Company of my 9th battalion of chasseurs with its captain and its lieutenant d'Estibayre and Becdelièvre (1) that behind this ensemble an entire army corps (15 to 20 thousand men) stood in the shelter of new fortifications staggered One will be convinced that these unfortunate troops gave the assault without breach to a fortress of first order and to an army.

(1) Moreover the enemies on guard for the two hours that the fire at Malakoff lasted had taken at leisure their provisions.

One will wonder how two hundred men and seven officers reached the works where they were killed or made prisoners (2) not without having nailed a dozen pieces, and one will honour their unknown valour. Finally, we will say that these are high and guilty military follies, given that this objective was absolutely secondary. But it would have been a terrible slaughter if the other divisions had given in to the even more secondary objectives - even more difficult to approach (from further away) and almost as impassable! They made a few movements in the trenches, without leaving them, but the trenches had become dangerous because some of the appalling fire directed by the defenders against the two brigades involved was reaching the dugouts. There were still dead and wounded there, and among the first were two general officers of the greatest merit, Rivet and Breton.

(2) Three officers and a hundred of these brave men survived, remained in Russian hands and were returned at the Peace.

The Couston Brigade, none of whose group could, I believe, climb the works, also suffered considerable losses, perhaps less than mine, which may be attributed to the relative protection which the salient of the Central Bastion afforded them against the fire from the Quarantine and the annexed batteries which were so deadly to my troops.

I end here this rapid account, written in the current of my very present and vivid memories.

The war in the East was the highlight of my military life. It is during this endless drama where I met so many surprises and where my reflection had to dig into so many subjects, that I learned best to judge things and to know men.

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Line 18 and following.

"The Eastern War was the light of my military life. All the reflections which follow show that this ray of light only illuminated political views. The historian, more philosopher than military, found in Crimea and in Italy precious information; the man of war did not bring back much, which explains the poverty of the baggage which he opened to our eyes after September 2/20? 1870.

gnl. de Malroy

"And how many Caesars have become Laridons!

It was there, too, that I began to understand the military Empire and to discover the destinies it had in store for our country. There I had the premonition that war would be its principal means of government and the proof that, strengthened by the legend, it would throw itself into war without a programme, without preparation, confusing armies with institutions and believing it would have the latter because it would have the former.

Later, in Italy, I had daily confirmation of these sad predictions and I expressed them publicly: "We are opposed," I said, in '*The French Army of 1867*', "to the triumph of our arms in the East and in Italy; but it is precisely there that we have collected the warnings and the lessons of which we justly - and helplessly - ask the future to take account.

But the legend was stronger than all, and one day, as we had foreseen, a sword longer than the others pierced this gas-filled balloon, which defrosted and was precipitated.....The event could have and even should have happened in Sebastopol or Italy.

[Jean de la Fontaine (1621-1695): Fable 8: Caesar and Laridon were brother dogs. Caesar hunted in the forest and fathered some pedigree puppies. Laridon was a kitchen hound, who fathered a vast number of mongrels...]

Providence postponed it by choice, so that the fall would be more striking and the lesson more striking.

Have we made the most of it?

Signed Trochu

Tours, 19 January 1877.